

[John Polk Wallace]

September 21, 1939

JoHn Polk Wallace (Farmer)

Huntersville, N.C.

Mary P. Wilson, writer

Dudley W. Crawford, reviser Original Names: Changed Names:

John Polk Wallace George J. Wilkins

Fannie Emmie

Jim Sid

Daisy Dixon Dona Dean C9 - N.C. Box 2

“Good God a'mighty, Miss Emmie, can't you teach these blame chickens no better manners than this? Hope I may die if they ain't roosting in my jalopy (automobile). George Wilkins was more than six feet tall with a heavy head of hair which was liberally turning grey. He wore waist-length overalls which looked many sizes too small. His peculiar tone of voice, his unusual appearance and extreme animation marked him as either a half-wit or a man who had carried his childhood propensities into middle life. His habit of calling his mother “Miss Emmie”, and his father “Sid”, might possibly be accounted for by classifying him as an example of arrested development.

“No wonder I have trouble keeping me a gal friend; 'course they don't want to ride in a chicken coop.”

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Miss Emmie ignored the ravings of her over grown son until she looked at him for a while and then remarked: "All right, George J. go ahead and use that gun you keep swinging in your belt; shoot the whole bunch and then I'll let you look after the grocery bill. You know these chickens keep your Pa and you from having to go in debt; furthermore, if you'd find a girl that was any account to work, I'd much rather you'd marry her and bring her 2 on home so she could help me with my chores. No, you're not satisfied unless you're romping the roads, sucking cigarettes and drinking liquor. You needn't shake your head at me, I don't need to hush 'cause we got a visitor. You're going to have to stay here and entertain her while I take my eggs to the market. Where's your Pa?"

"How you expect me to keep up with Sid? Maybe he is out in the crib sampling that wine you hid the other day."

"Don't tell me you both have found it. I declare to goodness, I won't have a drop left for the preacher to use for communion." Miss Emmie hurried toward the crib and emerged with her guilty spouse.

"I'll never give you another drink of any liquor I have", Sid told his son. "You could have told your Ma I was at the stable and give me a chance to come in the house instead of telling her where I was. Some of these days I'm going to forget myself and give you the thrashing you deserve." George's Pa was a short, thick shouldered man. His red-rimmed eyes rested in painstaking scrutiny on the figure of his son.

"Come on Ma, let's get to town early 'fore such a crowd gathers. I'm sure the lady understands why we 3 have to leave; George J. can talk enough and more for all of us."

In a few minutes Miss Emmie and Sid were headed toward town with their eggs, leaving their peculiar son to give the story I wanted.

"It's a wonder they didn't have two or three flat tires for me to fix for them 'fore they could leave. Sid won't even let me have a piece of patching rubber for my jalopy, but they always

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know who to call on when they have trouble. I ain't treated right, but I have to put up with it; I ain't got no education to git out in the world and hustle for myself. Now, Sid and Miss Emmie will give my brother anything, and to my notion he's as low-down mean to them as anyone could possibly be. He went and mistreated his wife 'fore they married and I seen his shot-gun wadding. He lives down yonder in the field in that new house and Sid and Miss Emmie supports him and his wife and two children. Sid expects me to plow today while he's gone, but he's going to get fooled. Me, I'm going to leave and got drunk after a while." George slammed his car door and turned, rage clouding his heavy features. His stained hands knotted into fists. His tousled hair and whiskers bristled with resentment. "Now, I know , I know , I would hurt myself 4 more than Sid; I guess I'll forget about it. Come in the house and stay as long as you like.

"I was born and raised here in this old house. You can see Sid tried to keep it painted but Miss Emmie don't waste much time inside since she got those chickens; she's got about two or three thousand. She don't even let Sid and me have any milk to drink; gives it all to them pets of hers.

"I'm thirty eight years old and I want to leave the farm. One of my boy friends promised to get me a job scrubbing in the mill where he works. I'm going to take it if he does; maybe I can get to learn how to do something else and make some real money. Sid only gives me one third of the cotton crop for all the work I do. I'd done left him 'fore now if he hadn't been getting old. " Tain't no use of him taking advantage of me 'cause I belong to him. All I hope is I'll be missed a little if I do get a chance to go in the mill.

"I wish you could see my gal, her name is Dona Dean. Miss Emmie says she's too young for me, but I enjoy going to see her and if she ain't got no better sense than to like a no-good ugly thing like me, well, that's my good luck. I ain't a-wanting to get married nohow; what would an old ignorant man like me do with 5 a wife if he had one?

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"I don't mean to rush you, but I 'spect I'd better get that work done for Sid so's he'll forget about me telling Miss Emmie he was in her wine.

"Fore you go, I'll tell you something right funny. About three months ago I went to the mail box for Sid and found thirty five gallons of whiskey some bootlegger had hid in the bushes. I rushed back to the house and got the wagon. I remember loading it on early that morning, but I don't know much about what happened after that. Sid says I was gone 'till after dark and when I brung the team home I had drunk or wasted five gallons of moonshine. He took a plank and beat me 'cause I was so excited I left his cotton check in the mail box."